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[Reports to the Surgeon-General Public Health and Marine-Hospital Service.]

Investigation of reported typhus fever at La Cananea, Mexico.

LOS ANGELES, CAL., June 16, 1902.

SIR: In obedience to Bureau telegram of June 3, 1902, I left Los Angeles, Cal., the next day, for La Cananea, Sonora District, Mexico, for the purpose of investigating the rumors of typhus fever in that mining district.

I reached La Cananea the evening of June 6, and called on the chief surgeons of the La Cananea Mining Company, Drs. Van Dorn and Lang, who extended to me many courtesies and offered every facility for examining into the health of the camp. I examined all the patients in the company's hospital, which is a new, two-story brick hospital, unusually well appointed for an institution of that character in a mining camp. There were but 12 patients in the hospital, 4 medical and 8 surgical. Of the medical cases there were 2 pneumonia and 2 typhoid cases. There were 2 smallpox cases carefully isolated from the camp, both in the desquamative stage. There was very little sickness in the camp at this time. During May, the surgeons said that they had had many cases of fatal pneumonia, but no disease that had aroused any suspicion of typhus fever. I was shown extracts from the El Paso, Tex., papers, describing a fatal disease called "black heart" that was said to prevail in La Cananea. They claimed the rumors were spread by discontented miners who had been discharged. During the past six months they had 30 cases of smallpox, with no fatality. All cases had been isolated, and all exposed vaccinated. Over 2,400 vaccine tubes of glycerinated virus were used. I next called on the Mexican health officer, Dr. Barros, who was absent. He returned the call next day and extended the courtesy of inspecting the Mexican health reports for that district. The population of the district is about 12,000, chiefly Mexicans. No body can be buried without a certificate from the Mexican officials. The number of deaths recorded since January, 1902, is as follows: January, 9; February, 17; March, 33; April, 35; May, 35, and June, 9, making a total of 138. This is not a high death rate for a mining camp of 12,000 population, where conditions not conducive to good health obtain. The chief cause of death was disease of the pulmonary tract. In March, April, and early part of May the weather is inclement in this section, and many deaths from pneumonia were recorded. The cases were typical, it was stated; there was no eruption and nothing indicative of typhus or other quarantinable disease. During the early part of the winter there were many cases of influenza, but no deaths. In some of these cases, there were roseala rashes of two or three days' duration, which quickly passed away, did not become petechial, and were not accompanied by high fever or alarming symptoms.

I left La Cananea June 8 for Naco, Ariz., on the Mexican border and called on Dr. W. E. Lindley, who had been appointed county health officer during the rumors of "black heart" at La Cananea. He had made two trips to La Cananea, he told me, to look into the matter, and had met the trains from that place during the prevalence of smallpox, to keep contagious diseases from crossing the border. He said that he had found nothing suspicious, and saw nothing to suggest typhus.

I then went to Bisbee, Ariz., to the Copper Queen Mine by stage. The population of this mine is 7,000. Dr. A. R. Hickman, the surgeon in charge, showed me all the patients in his hospital, about a dozen, six of whom were medical cases. At this mine there had been the same high mortality from pneumonia, but no disease suspicious of typhus or

any other quarantinable disease, except a few cases of smallpox. One death from fever was described to me by Dr. Hickman. That was the only case that could have excited any suspicion. It was as follows: A miner, native of the United States, aged 35, died one week before my arrival. He was taken sick with a chill, high fever, and vomiting, and gradually grew worse. There was no diarrhea and no delirium, but the general condition resembled typhoid fever. The spleen was palpably enlarged. Twenty-four hours before death a condition resembling hemorrhagic purpura developed, beginning in the most dependent portions of the body, soon covering nearly all of the body, including the face. There were large hemorrhagic areas in the skin, with bloodless skin spots in between; no petechiæ. Two abscesses, deep cellulitis, developed over both elbows and in the buttocks. The patient died six days after onset. Post-mortem examination showed no internal changes other than enlargement of the Peyers patches and slight splenic enlargement. There was some hypostatic congestion of the lungs. Cultures from the abscesses over the elbows were made by Dr. Brown. These showed pure culture of typhoid bacilli, I was told. There were no inflammatory changes in brain or medulla. A culture was made from the spinal fluid and showed streptococci. The mine surgeons agreed on a diagnosis of typhoid, in a poorly nourished miner, with invasion of the blood by typhoid germs to the extent of producing a typhoidal septicæmia. There had been no other cases like this in camp and none had developed since. The reports from La Cananea had not been regarded as truthful.

I rejoined my station at Los Angeles, Cal., June 11, 1902.

Respectfully,

HILL HASTINGS,

Passed Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

A case of smallpox at Juneau, Alaska.

JUNEAU, ALASKA, June 16, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to report that on last Saturday evening, Mr. H. States was brought home to Juneau from his mining camp supposed to be suffering with measles. On examination it was found to be confluent smallpox in the fifth day of eruption. It was 12 p. m. when he arrived and by 4 a. m. he was removed to a temporary pest tent, and his 3 companions were isolated. The house has been fumigated and every precaution taken to prevent it from spreading. A pesthouse will be built at once. It is supposed that some Indians camped at his mining camp during the winter, as he had been out in the woods for the past four weeks away from any other possible contagion. The only known cases in southeastern Alaska are the two cases reported from Skagway.

Respectfully,

SAMUEL C. LEONHARDT,

Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.

A case of smallpox at Machias, Me.

MACHIAS, ME., June 19, 1902.

SIR: I have the honor to report as follows: A man from the lumber camps came to my office Monday morning and upon examination I found him to be a smallpox suspect. The board of health for Machias, Me., pronounced the case varioloid, reported at once by wire to the State board of health, and placed the patient in quarantine in our pesthouse. I have visited the patient to-day and found him doing well. Machias, Marshfield, Northfield, and Wesley are now being vaccinated. I think we shall stop the spread of the disease.

Respectfully,

SAM. B. HUNTER,

Acting Assistant Surgeon, U. S. M. H. S.